



GRANTS AND AGREEMENTS

The West Region Wildfire Council was recently awarded \$101,000 from the Bureau of Land Management to assist communities on the Western Slope in reducing wildfire risk. The award is part of the BLM's Community Assistance program to reduce the risk and impact of wildfire on communities within Colorado through planning, hazardous fuels reduction, mitigation and education activities.

The West Region Wildfire Council supports interagency efforts to develop and implement plans to mitigate the threat of catastrophic wildland fire to communities and natural resources in Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel counties. The WRWC promotes information sharing and collaboration between local communities and state and federal fire managers for fuels management, wildfire suppression, enhancing capability, planning and collaboration.

The WRWC intends to use the award to hire a Community Wildfire Protection Plan Coordinator to assist the six counties with the ongoing development, maintenance and implementation of their CWPPs. The award will also provide funding for fuels reduction projects in local communities. Funded fuels reduction projects would be prioritized by the recommendations in the respective county's CWPP.

"This award is the catalyst to bring together regional efforts of planning to reduce wildfire risk and actually implementing projects on the ground that will increase life safety," said Chris Barth, Fire Mitigation & Education Specialist for the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit.

State legislation that passed last year requires every Colorado county to identify fire hazard zones in unincorporated areas by January 1, 2011. Within six months of identifying these zones, counties also must develop CWPPs that establish guidelines for fire mitigation in each hazard zone. Delta, Gunnison, Montrose and Ouray counties are currently developing their CWPPs in a collaborative effort that involves local, state, and federal representatives working in conjunction with two fire management consulting firms.

The BLM has been working cooperatively with recipients to help mitigate fire hazards, along with providing fire safety education and training and planning for catastrophic wildfire events, within, or in the vicinity of BLM-managed lands in Colorado. Community Assistance awards support fire departments, local governments, community service organizations, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations throughout Colorado.

WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Historically, fire activity on the Unit continues to taper off in September with 98 fires occurring in September over the previous 10-year period. Nonetheless, September is the 4th most active month of the year for number of fires and the 8th most active in terms of acres burned.

Lightning caused fires continue to be the great concern (81%) and predominately occur in the Ouray and Norwood Zones. Debris burning follows lightning as the second highest cause at 12% - occurring largely in the Gunnison Zone.

Month	# of Fires	# of Acres
September	98 (4 th)	1885.4 (8 th)

	Lightning	Campfires	Smoking	Debris	Incendiary	Equipment	Railroads	Youth	Misc	TOTAL
Gunnison	6	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	1	16
Ouray	37	0	2	3	2	0	0	0	2	46
Norwood	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
Total	79	0	2	12	2	0	0	0	3	98

WILDLAND TRAINING

The Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit will be hosting Intermediate Fire Behavior (S-290) in November. The course will be held at the Montrose Public Lands Center from November 1st through November 5th. Nominations are due to Lori Veo by October 1st.

The Colorado Wildfire and Incident Management Academy winter course catalog is now available (<http://cwfima.com/index.php>). The 2011 winter academy will be held in Colorado Springs. Nominations for courses are due to Lori Veo by September 24th.

We will be offering Firefighter Training (S130), Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (S-190) and Fire Operations in the Wildland Urban Interface (S-215) to our cooperators. Details are still being worked out for all three courses, but they are likely to be scheduled in the spring. S-130/190 will be offered in Lake City to address a request from the Lake City Fire Department to receive basic wildland training as identified in the recently completed Hinsdale County CWPP. S-215 will be offered in Montrose to provide a centrally located training for the many fire protection districts with interface issues.

INCIDENT INFORMATION

Public Affairs Specialists from the BLM's Uncompahgre and Gunnison Field Offices; the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest; and the Mitigation and Education Specialist from the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit have been sharing the Public Information Officer rotation for MIFMU since May. In June, the BLM Public Affairs Specialist took another position and the rotation was then split between the two individuals from GMUG

and MIFMU. The rotation has worked well to provide information about fires (planned and unplanned) in the area, as well as current fire conditions.

During the course of the season, some lessons have been learned to improve incident communications for MIFMU. During the Beaver Fire, the fire information line was having problems and was thus changed. The new number has been changed to (970) 874-6602 and

is updated regularly. To improve our ability to post real-time fire information on the internet, we now have access to all units within MIFMU on InciWeb. Also, additional contacts have been added to our media distribution list to ensure the public is informed.

The PIO rotation is scheduled to end at the end of September. For fire information needs after September, Fire Dispatch will request support as needed.

FIRE

Two wildfires continue to be managed for resource objectives within the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit. Recent hot, dry conditions have created a favorable environment for these fires to continue to achieve resource objectives of reducing excessive fuels and improving wildlife habitat. Both fires are located on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

BUCKHORN ROAD FIRE

The Buckhorn Road Fire is located 3.5 miles E of Colona, CO. This lightning-caused fire was originally reported on August 12th. The fire is contained but, not out, and continues to be monitored by MIFMU fire resources. No structures or private lands are threatened. The fire is currently at 91 acres.

LION CREEK FIRE

The Lion Creek Fire is burning along the Utah/Colorado state line approximately 3 miles W of Paradox. That fire also started from lightning activity on August 12th. The fire is contained, but not out, and continues to be monitored by MIFMU fire resources. No structures or private lands are threatened. The fire is currently at 600 acres.

Fire officials and public land managers, in consultation with resource specialists, made the decision to manage both fires to provide benefits to the landscape while maintaining safety to firefighters and nearby communities. Residents in the areas of both fires may witness periods of heavy smoke as the dense fuels continue to burn.

Fire management decisions are based on many factors. Responding to a fire may include using multiple strategies ranging from monitoring a fire that is beneficial to the landscape to aggressively putting out a fire that threatens people, homes, or important natural or cultural resources. However, safety always comes first in fire management. No structure, natural or cultural resource is worth a human life. If you own a home in a fire-prone area, you should take a few simple steps to make your property more defensible. It will increase your safety and that of firefighters, too.

For the latest information on wildfires and fire restrictions in the area, please call the MIFMU Fire Information line (970.874.6602), visit the MIFMU website (http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/), or follow us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/MIFMU>).

WEST REGION WILDFIRE COUNCIL

The West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC) met on September 8th at the Ridgway Events Center. The Council announced that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been signed with the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) as fiscal sponsor for WRWC. The new relationship with SJMA allows WRWC to manage awards with one entity rather than several while recognizing significant administrative cost savings. SJMA began fiscal sponsorship of WRWC with the successful award from BLM Community Assistance for \$101,000. WRWC will use

the award predominately to fund a CWPP Coordinator for the region as well as funding fuels treatments on private lands within the six county area.

September's meeting was devoted to discussing the details and expectations for the CWPP coordinator position. An announcement for the position will be completed and distributed by the end of September. The announcement will be open through October. Interviews will occur in November, and a decision on the successful candidate will hopefully be reached in December. A planned start date is set for early January 2011 to

coincide with the multiple public meetings for the four county CWPPs currently in progress. The position will be a contractual employee with SJMA working for the WRWC. To continue to provide direction for the council and supervise the contractual employee, WRWC is establishing a steering committee consisting of a state, county and fire district representative.

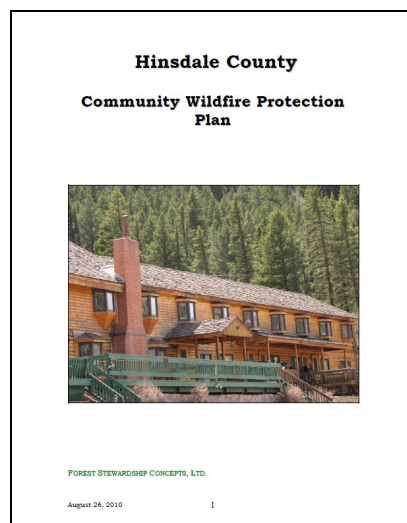
The next meeting is scheduled to coincide with the close of the position announcement for the CWPP Coordinator. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 28th in Delta.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS

The development of county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) continues to progress in Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, and Ouray Counties. Hinsdale County's CWPP is completed and awaiting signature from both county officials and the Colorado State Forest Service. The CWPP process was formally initiated for Delta, Gunnison, Montrose and Ouray Counties at the end of August with kick-off meetings in each of the four counties. Anchor Point (CWPP contractor) will be visiting each of the counties throughout September for the field work portion of the plans' development. *The schedule for the field work and data analysis portions of the plans development may be disrupted slightly as several of members of Anchor Point have been directly impacted by the Fourmile Canyon Fire.*

DELTA COUNTY

The kick-off meeting for Delta County was held on August 26th. Delta County, Colorado State Forest Service, Paonia Fire Protection District, Delta Fire Protection District, Cedaredge Fire Protection District, Hotchkiss Fire Protection District, USFS, MIFMU and the contractor attended. Field work is scheduled for September 9th through September 13th. Public meetings dates have not been set, but are planned for late January/early February.



GUNNISON COUNTY

The kick-off meeting for Gunnison County was held on August 27th. Gunnison County, Colorado State Forest Service, Crested Butte Fire Protection District, Gunnison County Fire Protection District, Arrowhead Fire Protection District, NPS, BLM, MIFMU and the contractor attended. Field work is scheduled for September 10th through September 12th and September 24th through October 1st. Public meetings dates have not been set, but are planned for late January/early February.

HINSDALE COUNTY

Completed - Awaiting Signatures

MONTROSE COUNTY

The kick-off meeting for Montrose County was held on August 25th. Montrose County, Colorado State Forest Service, Montrose Fire Protection District, MIFMU and the contractor attended. Field work will likely occur at the end of September, but has not yet been finalized. Public meetings dates have not been set, but are planned for late January/early February.

OURAY COUNTY

The kick-off meeting for Ouray County was held on August 26th. Ouray County, Colorado State Forest Service, Log Hill Fire Protection District, Ouray Fire Protection District, MIFMU and the contractor attended. Field work is schedule for September 23rd through September 28th. Public meetings dates have not been set, but are planned for late January/early February.

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

Completed



FUELS

The Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit began conducting several prescribed burns at the end of August and early part of September. Of the scheduled burns announced in the last *MIFMU Monthly*, the Highway 90, Dry Park and Chaffe burns have been implemented. The Highway 90 burn was on BLM-managed lands and consisted of 20 acres of pinyon/juniper that had been mechanically treated. The Dry Park burn, also on BLM-managed lands, consisted of 400 acres of pinyon/juniper that had been rollerchopped in the past. Of the 400 acres, 170 acres have been completed to date. There may be additional opportunities to burn the remaining 230 acres this fall. The Chaffe burn – a joint effort between the BLM and Colorado Division

of Wildlife – was recently completed. The Chaffe burn consisted of 500 acres of mix mountain shrub that was treated with a hydroxax in 2009.

Both the Bear Paw and Columbine burns are planned for September as conditions allow. Both of those burns are in oak brush on USFS-managed lands.

Fuel mitigation work in the Four Neighborhood site was completed earlier this summer (see *photos below*.)

For the latest information on fires (planned and unplanned), please call the MIFMU fire information line (970.874.6602) or visit the MIFM website (http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/).



Pre- and Post- Photos of the Four Neighborhoods Fuels Project



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Look for new updates to come to the MIFMU website in 2010

http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/

September Events

- *Hinckley Fire, Hinckley, Minnesota, September 1, 1894 - 418 people killed*
- *Sundance Fire, Idaho, September 1, 1967 - 2 firefighters killed*
- **West Region Wildfire Council, September 8**
- *Fourmile Canyon Fire, Boulder, Colorado, September 6, 2010*
- *Laguna Fire, September 26, 1970 - 8 people killed*
- **MIFMU Fuels Conference Call, September 20**
- **Montrose County Public Safety Fair, September 25**

